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update

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news and events

Mongolia. An international conference organized by UNDP in Ulaanbaatar has garnered about US$250 million in donor commitments for emergency aid and projects designed to assist Mongolia's economic reform programme.

UNDP Administrator William H. Draper III and Mongolia's Deputy Prime Minister Davaadorjiin Gambold co-chaired the country's first international donor conference on 9-10 October. The conference sought food aid, imports support and technical assistance to speed the country's effort to move from a centrally-planned to a market-based economy.

Representatives from about 25 international agencies and bilateral donors met with Mongolian officials in Ulaanbaatar to discuss the country's immediate development needs. UNDP has identified some 20 projects in need of international funding. These would help to promote small and medium-sized businesses, privatize state enterprises, encourage foreign investment, reform tax policy and implement a social safety net programme.

Among the commitments confirmed at the conference were $61 million in import support grants, emergency loans and technical assistance from Japan; $26.3 million in balance-of-payments support, food aid and technical assistance from the United States; and $90 million in credits from the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Other bilateral donors included Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, India, the Netherlands, New Zealand, South Korea and Thailand. UN agencies pledging support included the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and the UN Population Fund.

Mongolia has sought urgent international assistance to help it weather an economic crisis caused largely by the loss of Soviet trade and financing. In the first half of 1991, the country's imports declined by 61 per cent and exports by 53 per cent. There is a severe shortage of the spare parts and raw materials needed to operate state industries. The World Bank estimates that Mongolia's GDP for 1991 will fall about 18 per cent.

North Korea. Representatives of North and South Korea, China and Mongolia met in Pyongyang on 18 October, agreeing to begin work on a sub-regional plan for economic cooperation.

The meeting, chaired by Krishan G. Singh, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of its Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, focussed principally on the preparation of a development programme for the Tumen River delta, a region where the borders of North Korea, China and the Soviet Union come together. Representatives discussed the development of port facilities as well as road and railway links to the hinterland of all four countries. Given adequate transportation facilities, the sub-region's abundant raw materials and plentiful supply of labour could act as a magnet for Japanese and South Korean capital.

Also under discussion were projects to stimulate agriculture, develop alternative energy sources and reduce air pollution from coal-burning plants. UNDP is examining projects in these areas for technical assistance over the 1992-1996 period.

New York. The upcoming conferences on coal use being planned for China and India are being made possible through a project launched by the UN Fund for Science and Technology for Development and by a trust fund of $450,000 put up by the Federal Republic of Germany.

The conferences, scheduled to take place in Beijing in December and in New Delhi the following month, will help both countries

assess the effects that pollution from coal burning is having on their environments. The meetings, attended by experts from all parts of the world, will also focus on ways that these two Asian countries can reduce reliance on coal and increase use of alternate energy sources.

Libya. FAO announced victory over a screwworm fly outbreak that had threatened livestock and wildlife throughout Africa.

The pest was first detected in Libya in 1988 and was probably introduced to Africa by imported livestock from Latin America. By 1990 Libyans were reporting some 30-40 new cases of infected animals per day. The screwworm is a parasite that is attracted to warm-blooded animals. Its female is drawn to wounds, in which she lays eggs that hatch into larvae within hours. The parasite can kill an untreated animal within two weeks.

Using a strategy that had been effective in eliminating the pest in the United States and Latin America, millions of male flies were flown into the country each week from a Mexican factory that sterilized the insects through irradiation. The sterile flies were then loaded onto small planes and released over affected areas. By mating with wild female flies, the irradiated males cause them to lay unfertilized eggs.

The strategy appears to have eliminated the pest one year ahead of schedule. By April, after six months of releasing sterile flies, the number of reported cases of infected livestock dropped to zero. The outbreak was declared eradicated in mid-October.

Had the outbreak not been quickly contained, it could have spread throughout Africa and into the Middle East and Europe. "The damage to domestic animals, wildlife and even man would have been incalculable," said Patrick Cunningham, director of the FAO Screwworm Emergency Center in North Africa.

The eradication effort was co-financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the African Development Bank UNDP and FAO.

New York. Papers presented at the UNDP seminar on structural adjustment in Tanzania held in October 1990 are now being published in a five-book series. The first two books in the series, *Stabilization and Adjustment* and *Aspects of Exchange Rate Determination,* are available from United Nations Publications, Room DC2-0853, New York, New York 10017 or by calling (212) 963-8302 or (800) 253-9646 within the United States. The first book costs $19.50 and the second, $16.95. Please add $3.50 for postage and handling.

projects endorsed by the action committee

(all projects subject to modification; sums quoted in US dollars)

25 September 1991

Argentina. UNDP will assist the government in upgrading its administrative systems by helping to computerize office operations and by staff training. The project builds on earlier UNDP assistance that helped introduce computer systems at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its offices abroad. Modernizing the Ministry's office operations is part of an overall effort to strengthen the public sector. Some 400 workstations were installed in Buenos Aires and in 10 embassies abroad, and hundreds of staff members received training in the use of software packages. While the first phase focussed on communications, the follow-up phase will emphasize using computers to improve administrative procedures in areas such as personnel management, accounting and payroll. An additional 80 embassies and consulates are expected to benefit from new computer systems and another 200 staff from training. Proposed UNDP contribution: $550,000. Government cost-sharing: $7,106,900. Funds are to pay for computers and training as well as for experts in such areas as informatics, systems development, installation and maintenance. Government-executed and implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (ARG/90/012)

Benin. The UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and UNDP are supporting grassroots rural development to help Benin overcome a nearly decade-long decline in food production and per capita income. The project will be located in western Atacora where living standards are much lower than in other provinces. UNCDF will help finance self-help

community initiatives through Village Development Funds managed by local NGOs. The Funds will support community-run ventures such as cereal banks, cooking oil factories and blacksmith shops. It will also assist groups involved in rebuilding dams, bridges, wells and other infrastructure projects.

The NGOs will be subcontracted to provide training and to monitor the disbursement and repayment of funds on a village by village basis. They will assist the rural population in identifying local needs and in carrying out micro-projects. Proposed UNCDF contribution: $1,800,845 for a credit fund, mission costs and programme support. Proposed UNDP contribution: $694,360 for technical assistance and NGO services. Proposed cooperating agency: UNDP's Office for Project Services (UNDP/OPS). Implemented by the Ministry of Planning and Statistics. (BEN/88/C02)

Burundi. Nearly 95 per cent of Burundi's 5 million people live in rural areas dependent on agriculture. Rapid population growth creates increasing pressure on productive land, leading to loss of soil fertility, deforestation and erosion. The Commune of Mutumba is an isolated region in the province of Karuzi where because of these problems crop yields and livestock production are low. The proposed UNCDF project aims to improve rural conditions in the area. It will build on the successful work of CISV, an Italian NGO, which has operated in Mutumba for the past five years. The programme focusses on agroforestry and conservation measures, veterinary care services, credit access, road rehabilitation and the construction of a primary school. CISV will provide technical support to improve soil fertility on 900 small farms, reforest 390 hectares, create pilot demonstration plots and form 15 cooperative groups in livestock breeding. It will also help improve extension services and upgrade the Centre for Agricultural Development. Proposed UNCDF contribution: $1,307,600 for an NGO subcontract, infrastructure rehabilitation and the revolving fund for income-generating activities. Implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. (BDI/87/C01)

Colombia. Colombia's vast tropical forests are being threatened by rapid colonization in the areas of Orinoquia, Amazonia, Urabá and Magdalena Medio. An average of 600,000 hectares of forests are cut down by settlers each year. The rapid growth of settlements without basic services is adding to the already precarious living conditions of the region's 500,000 people. The fragile forest ecosystem is also endangered. Although there is legislation designed to use and preserve natural resources, there is no national policy for managing development.

The proposed project is aimed at strengthening regional planning to promote development in the Amazonia while protecting its delicate environment. The National Planning Department will be assisted in creating a geographical information system to collect and analyze data on the region's natural resources and biodiversity, as well as social and economic conditions. The data will be used to design maps for land surveys. Coordination between local governments will be improved, and NGOs will be encouraged to participate. Training programmes will be implemented for regional planning and conservation.

Third-party cost-sharing from the Netherlands: $2,087,122. Funds are to pay for planning experts, training and NGO subcontracts. The project will be government-executed and implemented by the National Planning Department. (COL/90/044)

Cook Islands. The public sector in the Cook Islands employs more than 3,000 of the country's 18,000 inhabitants. Management weaknesses in the public sector have been a major constraint on the government's ability to stimulate economic growth. Through UNDP's Management Development Programme, this project seeks to improve Cabinet control over the performance of government agencies. A Resource Management Committee, to be chaired by the Prime Minister and made up of core government agencies, will be created. It will address such issues as budgetary control, personnel management, training and investment programmes. Additional support for the effort will be sought at an upcoming Round Table meeting. Proposed UNDP contribution: $400,000 for experts in planning

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and management, UN Volunteers, and travel and mission costs. Executed by the UN Department of Technical Cooperation for Development and implemented by the Prime Minister's Department. (CKI/91/001)

Ghana. UNDP will help strengthen government planning and management during Ghana's economic recovery programme, and will aim to reduce unemployment, increase productivity and develop human resources. Staff at the Ministry of Mobilization and Social Welfare (MMSW) will receive training in gathering labour data on the country's formal, informal, urban and rural sectors. New training courses will be introduced to help young people and the self-employed increase their incomes. A coordinating unit will be set up within the Ministry to promote employment-generating activities in the informal sector. Proposed UNDP contribution: $1,910,000 for a project coordinator, experts, fellowships, training and equipment. Executed by the International Labour Organisation and implemented by the MMSW. (GHA/89/007)

18 September 1991

Paraguay. An efficient and modern air transport system is vital to helping this landlocked country spur tourism, foreign trade and commerce. To this end, UNDP will help strengthen the administrative and technical capacities of the National Administration of Civil Aviation. Under the project, such things as airport security, supervision and services will be modernized. In addition, civil aviation codes and legislation for licenses will be improved. As part of the project, new training programmes will be created to increase the number of skilled aviation personnel. Proposed UNDP contribution: $645,300. Government cost-sharing: $4 million. Funds are to pay for civil aviation experts, communication and computer systems, study tours, fellowships and training equipment. Government-executed and implemented by the National Civil Aviation Directorate. (PAR/91/003)

United Nations
Development Programme
One UN Plaza,
New York, NY 10017